

Security News

Western Region Security Office

February 2001

Earthquake Tips



Pacific Northwest rocked by 6.8 earthquake on February 28th.

As most everyone knows, a 6.8 earthquake hit the Pacific Northwest on February 28th. That just served as a reminder that no matter where you live, you should always be prepared for a disaster. You need to plan to survive on your own for 3 days. The following information is provided for your use as you design your disaster preparedness plan, for both your home and the office.

EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY

When an earthquake, winter storm or other disaster strikes, you might not have access to food, water, and electricity for days, or even weeks. Store those supplies now.

HOW MUCH WATER?

Store at least one gallon of water per person, per day.

HOW TO STORE WATER

Store water in thoroughly washed plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Food-grade plastic or soft drink bottles are a good idea.

Treat the water with a preservative, such as chlorine bleach, to prevent the growth of microorganisms. Use liquid bleach that contains 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite and no soap. Seal your water containers tightly, label them and store them in a dark cool place.

OTHER SOURCES OF EMERGENCY WATER

Water in your hot-water heater *

Water in your plumbing *

Melted ice cubes

Water from your toilet tank (Not the bowl) *

****Purify these sources of water before using****

THREE DIFFERENT WAYS TO PURIFY WATER

Let any suspended particles in the water settle to the bottom, or strain them through layers of paper towel or clean cloth.

1. Boil the water for 10 minutes
2. Add two drops of liquid chlorine bleach (bleach that contains 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite and no soap) per quart of water; four drops if the water is cloudy.
3. Add water purification tablets according to package directions.

EARTHQUAKE HOME HAZARD HUNT

Most injuries in earthquakes are caused by things falling or breaking or when people try to run from one place to another. Anything that can move, break, fall or cause a fire when your home starts to shake is a potential hazard. Inspect your home at least once a year and fix potential hazards.

- * place bed frames away from large windows, hanging lights, shelves, mirrors and glass-framed pictures.
- * Replace heavy pots for hanging plants with lighter weight pots.
- * Use closed hooks n hanging plants, lamps etc.
- * Place heavy breakable objects on lower shelves.
- * Strap the water heater to the studs in the nearest wall using plumbers tape.
- * Brace overhead light fixtures.
- * Repair cracks in ceilings or foundations.

- * Store week killer, pesticides and flammable products away from heat sources.
- * Clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors and gas vents.
- * Replace magnetic cabinet latches with latches that will hold shut during an earthquake.
- * Secure gas lines by using flexible connectors to appliances.
- * Block wheeled objects so they cannot roll.
- * Attach tall heavy furniture such as bookshelves to studs in walls.
- * Nail plywood to ceiling joists for protection from chimney bricks that could fall through the ceiling.
- * Bolt house to foundation.
- * Remove dead or diseased tree limbs that could fall on the house.
- * Rearrange furnishings so that if they did tip they would not block an evacuation route or access to your emergency supplies.

WHAT TO DO DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

If you are inside when the shaking starts:

- * Take cover under a table or desk and hold on
- * Sit against an inside wall and cover your head and neck

If you are outside when the shaking starts:

- * Sit down in an open area away from power lines and buildings

(Info provided by the City of Bellevue, WA Fire Department)

If you are in a vehicle:

- * Stop in an open area away from bridges and buildings
- * Stay in vehicle

If you are in bed:

- * Stay in bed
- * Cover your head with pillows or bedding

In all circumstances, try to stay away from anything that could break or fall such as windows, chimneys or tall furniture.

Emergency Contacts

Arrange with family or friends out of the state to be the family contact point. Arrange for everyone in your family to contact your designated contact. Leave only a brief message. In Washington, 73 million telephone calls were attempted after the quake and the cell phone system crashed due to the high volumes.

Travel

Do not attempt to get on the roads. After shocks and road damage create an immediate driving hazard. Stay where you are. Attempting to reach your home and other family members will create a hazard for yourself and others. As hard as it may be, wait until it is safe before venturing out and only when local emergency personnel have declared an area safe for travel.

Web Pages: Additional Information

Federal Emergency Management
<http://www.fema.gov>

USGS National Earthquake Information Center
<http://neic.usgs.gov>

Lists of maps of recent earthquakes
<http://www.seismo.usbr.gov/seismo/eqdata.html#wsu>



NOAA Earthquake Data
<http://www.nqdc.noaa.gov/seg/hazard/earthqk.html>

Understanding Earthquakes
<http://www.crustal.ucsb.edu/ics/understanding>

FireSafe: Common Earthquake Questions
<http://www.firesafe.com/pages/newbook4.html>

Be safe by planning ahead.
Practice your plan.

